

# Christmas begins with Christ



With the Advent Season fast approaching, St. George Church is once again participating in several humanitarian projects whereby we can provide assistance to Men, Women and Children in need. Our Lord has blessed us with so much – it is truly a blessing for us to be able to give back in some small way.

**OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD** is a program run by Samaritan's Purse Canada. Operation Christmas Child allows individuals an opportunity to give boys and girls in need around the world a tangible expression of God's love through a gift-filled shoebox. Shoeboxes are available downstairs. Simply decide whether you would like to pack for a boy or girl and then choose an age category – 2-4 yrs, 5-9 yrs or 10-14 years. Instructions and labels for download can be found by visiting <https://www.samaritanspurse.ca/pack-a-shoebox>. DO NOT include any liquids or glass items, nor any toys that could be considered a weapon. DO include some toiletries such as bar of soap, a toothbrush, a comb and/or brush, as well as a variety of small toys including puzzles, colouring/painting, school supplies etc. Also, please include \$12 to cover shipping charges. Remember to say a prayer for the child and his/her family who will be receiving your gift. National Collection Week is November 18-24, so please return your box to the church by November 17 if you wish for us to drop it off for you. Or you may also drop off your own box(es) at a drop off location near your home. <https://www.samaritanspurse.ca/drop-off-locations/>

**PRISON MINISTRY ANGEL TREE PROGRAM** – Every year, hundreds of thousands of children spend Christmas without their mom or dad due to parental incarceration. Angel Tree invites you to reach out to these children with the love of Jesus Christ; to transform what may be a painful season for them to a joyful and memorable one.

Angel Tree Christmas is a program of Prison Fellowship Canada (PFC) that connects church communities and individuals with the families of prisoners through the delivery of a Christmas gift on behalf of the incarcerated parent. Children have the excitement of receiving a gift, but more importantly it tells them that mom or dad is thinking about them at Christmas time. For prisoners, your support helps them experience the love of God during a time marked by guilt and loneliness. By strengthening their family ties, it also reduces their probability of re-offending when released.

We have agreed to sponsor 20 children whose parent is imprisoned. The cost of the gift is approximately \$35. Angels will be available, God-willing, the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend in November.

**LOOT BAGS FOR ST. JOHN THE COMPASSIONATE MISSION** - Once again, we are privileged to be able to offer special Christmas loot bags to the needy people who frequent St. John the Compassionate Mission. We will aim to be filling 150 bags for men, 75 for women and 300 for children. Included will be the usual items such as socks, hats and gloves, as well as many personal care items such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, etc. We will be packing the bags late November, so if you would like to help please let us know.

For all of these programs, we need your financial support! Donations may be made directly to the church, but please be sure to identify your donation for one/all of our humanitarian projects. If you have questions or would like to get more involved, please contact Michelle Alexopoulos at: 416-831-3813; [m.alexopoulos@utoronto.ca](mailto:m.alexopoulos@utoronto.ca); or Joanie Younes at 416-402-7424; [joanienuis@hotmail.com](mailto:joanienuis@hotmail.com). Thank you and God Bless You!